

Utility Scams



Don't Be A Victim!



Utility Scam

TYPE OF SCAM

The caller claims to be a billing representative from your utility company but is actually a crook looking for a quick payoff. They tell you that to avoid an immediate shutoff, you need to settle an overdue bill by providing them with your credit card number or a prepaid debit card

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCAM

Scammers call businesses and residents and falsely claim to represent the local utility company. They threaten account holders with a cancellation of services if an immediate payment is not made. Scammers can manipulate your caller ID display to show the local utility company's name or number when they call. They might also have personal information about you before they call, so don't take that as a sign they're the real thing.

Also, please keep in mind these fraudulent operations are not limited to phone calls or the types of utility accounts a resident or business holds: electricity, gas, phone services, etc. The scammers may reach you via email, or even a visit at your door.

A scammer called a resident to say their power bill was unpaid and the electricity would be cut off in 20 minutes unless payment was rendered immediately in cash. The scammer instructed him to go to a CVS or Rite Aid and purchase a Green Dot Money Pak Card within the next 10 minutes. After the purchase, the owner was supposed to scratch off the back of the card and phone him with the 14 digit serial number.

In another case the scammer told a resident to rush to Walgreen's, buy a Green Dot prepaid debit card with \$217 on it,

and then call back to pay. The resident said he was three days behind on his bill and that the man on the phone somehow knew his personal information, so he assumed the call was from ComEd. ComEd will never call you to demand an immediate payment, and that written notices will always be sent.

Utility companies say there have also been reports of scams where fake Utility Company employees are showing up at people's homes. In those cases they could be trying to collect money that customers may not really owe, or they may be casing the location for a future burglary. If customers are ever suspicious, they can ask to see a worker's ID or call the Utility Company to verify.

WHAT THE SCAMMER WANT\$

MONEY! The scammers usually follow these schemes:

- They instruct customers to buy a prepaid card and call back to a different phone number with the personal identification number (PIN) or other personal information.
- They ask for your bank information or credit card number or ask you to pay from your bank account or credit cards.

YOUR RESPONSE

Avoid being tricked in a utility scam by remembering the following:

- Utility companies will contact you by mail if your account is overdue and your services are at risk of being terminated. They will not call you for an account in default.
- If a caller demands a utility payment by prepaid card or wire transfer, it is a scam.

If you are unsure of the status of your account, contact your service provider using the number listed on your recent utility bill. For example, ComEd's Customer Service line is 1-800-334-7661 (1-800-EDISON1).

VICTIM OF THIS SCAM

If you or someone you know has fallen victim to this type of scam, there are a couple of things you can do. If you gave a scammer any account details or financial information, you should contact your bank immediately to alert them about this.

You can contact the Illinois Attorney General's office at 1-800-386-5438 (TTY 1-800-964-3013), or visit the Illinois Attorney General's website (www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov) and click on the "Protecting Consumers" link.

We also encourage you to report it online to the U.S. Department of Justice Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force at www.stopfraud.gov. To protect your personal information from future possible scams, visit the Federal Trade Commission's site for further information: <http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0272-how-keep-your-personal-information-secure>

To Report an Incident Contact

Lisle Police Department
630-271-4200 or 911
